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The Secret Garden

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Book Review

The Secret Garden

Author

Adapted by Calista Brill

Illustrator

Adelina Lirius

Reviewer

Sydnee Burr

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Rating

Outstanding

Level

Preschool, Primary

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Pages

32

Year

2020

ISBN

9780062937544

Publisher

HarperCollins

An unhappy little girl named Mary finds herself all alone in a dark, quiet manor and hates everything about it: the silence, the food, and even the moor. One day, a gardener tells Mary about a secret garden that once bloomed in the summer sun. It has since been locked up and left all alone, and suddenly Mary begins to warm to her surroundings. A friendly robin shows Mary a key to the garden. With the help of Dickon, who knows everything there is to know about plants and animals, they decide to give the withered garden new life. One day, when it was too wet outside to explore, Mary wanders the empty halls and hears someone crying. The crying begins again at night and Mary discovers a cousin hidden away, doing poorly in health and in spirit. Mary and Dickon begin to help cousin Colin out into the garden, reviving him along with the blooms.

Brill adapts *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett for younger readers. Sharing this story in a format that preschool and primary aged children can digest introduces them to themes like curiosity, adaptability, and healing. The focus on growth mindset is appropriate for all age groups, and is especially pertinent to preschool and primary aged children who are new to school and are learning how to learn. As Mary and Colin grow alongside the flowers, accept their surroundings, and choose not to feel stuck by inabilities, readers can learn the same lessons for themselves. The bright, alluring, and beautifully interesting illustrations help bring a timeless masterpiece into the reader's imagination.